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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000797

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SUBJECT: KALMA CAMP - UPCOMING EXPIRATION OF NRC
COORDINATION AGREEMENT

REF: (A) Khartoum 0320 (B) (05) Khartoum 1350 (c)

Khartoum 0454

Summary and Comment

¶1. On March 30, Charge, an Embassy Political Officer, and two USAID Darfur Field Office representatives met with the Sudan country director of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). NRC serves as coordinator for Kalma camp in South Darfur. NRC sought a meeting with Embassy and USAID officials to request USG assistance as NRC seeks to renew its camp coordination mandate, scheduled to expire on April 4. The agreement with the Government of National Unity (GNU) allows NRC to coordinate humanitarian activity for Kalma's 90,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and serve as an interlocutor between the camp's 450 sheiks, the humanitarian community, and government officials. In November 2005, Deputy Secretary Zoellick's direct intervention led to the renewal of NRC's camp coordination mandate. NRC gave us a copy of a letter from the head of NRC to the Deputy Secretary sent to State on March 23, asking for help once

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again. (Faxed to AF/SPG). Meanwhile, the Norwegians tell us they have been pressing, and that their State Minister is prepared to call the Humanitarian Affairs Minister before the 4th. We will track this with NRC over the coming days, as well as with the Norwegians.

¶2. NRC has been proactive in seeking the renewal of the camp coordination agreement long before its expiration. The absence of NRC in Kalma is likely to lead to a deterioration of humanitarian conditions and possibly to increased instability in the camp. End summary and comment.

Background

¶3. Kalma is Darfur's largest IDP camp and is located four kilometers east of Nyala. Many consider Kalma the most volatile IDP concentration in Darfur, as the

convergence of humanitarian, protection, and political issues in Kalma has led to repeated conflicts among IDPs, community leaders, Sudanese government officials, and security personnel. The government views the camp's large size and location near Nyala as a threat. As reported refuels, NRC's work in Kalma has been a contentious issue with the Sudanese government. Many in the humanitarian community believe the government's discontent with NRC is linked to NRC's human rights advocacy and work on sexual violence issues.

¶4. When NRC's coordination agreement expired in August 2005, the government repeatedly assured NRC that the agreement would be renewed, yet did not renew it until Deputy Secretary Zoellick requested the extension. In the intervening 11 weeks between the August expiration date and the renewal of the mandate, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) reported a deterioration of camp conditions and an increase in security incidents affecting IDPs.

Current Situation and Implications

¶5. The NRC country director stated that NRC met with Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Kosti Manibe (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) in early February to request a renewal of the camp coordination agreement. Although Minister Manibe assured NRC the agreement would be renewed before April 4, the South Darfur Deputy Wali later informed NRC that it is not possible to renew the agreement before the expiration date and without the approval of an unspecified committee. NRC's efforts to meet with the Khartoum-based Humanitarian Aid Commissioner since December have been unsuccessful. High-level U.N. efforts to ensure a timely renewal of the

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agreement have not succeeded to date.

¶6. The NRC country director reported that following a February meeting with Charge Hume, NRC representatives in Khartoum and Oslo encouraged Norwegian officials to take a proactive role in lobbying for the extension of NRC's agreement. As part of its current efforts, NRC sent a letter dated March 23 to Deputy Secretary Zoellick from NRC Secretary-General Tomas Colin Archer outlining the current situation and requesting the Deputy Secretary's intervention on NRC's behalf.

¶7. NRC and humanitarian agencies are developing contingency plans to ensure humanitarian needs are met if the GNU does not renew the agreement. The agencies operating in the camp are stretched thin and lack the capacity to fill NRC's role; however, designated agencies may take lead roles in particular sectors. Even so, many in the humanitarian community believe NRC's absence likely would result again in some degree of destabilization of the camp. NRC and others are concerned that no agency would be able to coordinate assistance to a large number of new IDPs in the camp should insecurity lead to new displacements. In addition, NRC is seeking an agency to coordinate activities such as latrine construction and water source reinforcement that must be completed in advance of the rainy season.

Next Steps

¶8. Embassy Khartoum will continue to coordinate with Norway and remains in contact with NRC representatives as April 4 approaches. The USAID field officer in Nyala is working closely with NRC and humanitarian agencies at the

field level to support contingency and rainy season planning.

STEINFELD